

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 SS-20 NSC-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03

IGA-02 AID-05 EB-12 DOTE-00 OMB-01 DRC-01 TRSE-00

COME-00 /114 W

----- 015343

R 042130Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5154

UNCLAS BOGOTA 8909

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELTN EAID, CO

SBJ: TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS OF THE QUEBRADA BLANCA BRIDGE

REF: A) BOGOTA 5809 B) BOGOTA 8511 C) STATE 212699 D) STATE 213372

1. MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COLOMBIAN ARMY ENGINEERS ARE COMPLETING WORK ON INSTALLATION OF BAILEY BRIDGE AT QUEBRADA BLANCA. THIS WILL BE FOURTH BAILEY BRIDGE TO BE ERECTED SINCE PERMANENT STRUCTURE WAS DESTROYED BY MASSIVE LANDSLIDE LAST JUNE 28. OF PREVIOUS THREE BAILEY BRIDGES: FIRST WAS SWEPT AWAY BY FLOODS ON SEPT 13 SECOND WAS COLLAPSED BY OVERLOADED TRUCK ON SEPT 20 AND THIRD COLLAPSED DURING INSTALLATION ON SEPT 27 NEW BRIDGE EXPECTED TO BE OPENED TO TRAFFIC TOMORROW.

2. SUCCESSIVE DISASTERS AT QUEBRADA BLANCA HAVE NEARLY DEPLETED IN-COUNTRY STOCKS OF BAILEY BRIDGE COMPONENTS. IN FACT, LAST TWO BRIDGES HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY CONSTRUCTED FROM BRIDGES DISMANTLED AND REMOVED FROM OTHER LOCATIONS.

3. WE HAVE PROVIDED ARMY ENGINEERS AND MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS OFFICIALS WITH PRICE AND AVAILABILITY DATA CONTAINED REFTELS C AND D. ARMY ENGINEERS HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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INDICATED DESIRE TO PURCHASE SOME BRIDGING BY

UTILIZING PROGRAMMED FMS CREDITS AND WE ARE ENCOURAGING THEM IN THAT DIRECTION. WE DO NOT KNOW CURRENT PLANS OF MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS, ALTHOUGH OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN QUOTED AS ANNOUNCING THAT PURCHASES HAVE BEEN OR ARE BEING MADE FROM U.K. US AND PUERTO RICO. HOWEVER, BUDGETARY RESTRICTIONS MAY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO MOVE QUICKLY.

4. COMMENT: GOC IS GIVING HIGH PRIORITY TO REESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE ROAD COMMUNICATIONS WITH VILLAVICENCIO AND SEEKING SOLUTION TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF EASTERN PLAINS. IN RECENT MOVE, PRESIDENT LOPEZ NAMED PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR RODRIGO URIBE ECHAVARRIA AS OVERALL PROJECT COORDINATOR AND CHAIRMAN OF A MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH ADOPTING INTEGRATED PLAN.

5. AS FAR AS BRIDGE IS CONCERNED GOC APPEARS TO HAVE SITUATION IN HAND FOR THE MOMENT. SHOULD PRESENT STRUCTURE COLLAPSE, HOWEVER, IT COULD WELL BE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FROM US IN THE PROCUREMENT AND/OR EXPEDITIOUS TRANSPORTATION OF A NEW BRIDGE.

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## Message Attributes

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